To further increase its revenue, BSNL has taken several new initiatives. These are as follows:-

- BSNL has engaged M/s Boston Consulting Group (BCG) for advising and providing handholding support in identifying problems and developing strategy keeping in view the changed market conditions.
- Leasing of BSNL's Passive Infrastructure to other service providers.
- Enterprise Business.
- Commercial utilization of fixed assets.
- Exploring international business.
- Introduction of NGN framework to increase revenue streams.
- Introducing Fixed Mobile Convergence to add value to landlines.

Universal Service Obligation Fund

1534. SHRI JABIR HUSAIN:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Telecom Ministry is planning to amend the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) rules to make it easier for telecoms to access over Rs. 11,000 crore corpus lying with Government to push rural telephony;

(b) whether an amendment is being done to remove rigidity in USOF rules and make it more flexible, and

(c) if so, the other steps being considered to push rural telephony and by what time these measures are likely to be considered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The existing Rules of Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) already have the provisions to provide subsidy support for public telecom and information services in rural and remote areas of the country. These Rules are being amended from time to time to expand the scope of rural telecom connectivity. Last such amendments were carried out in 17.11.2006 and 18.07.2008 to enable support for mobile services & broadband connectivity in rural & remote areas and for providing subsidy support to eligible operators for operational sustainability of Rural wire line Household Direct Exchange Lines (RDELs) installed prior to 01.04.2002.

Various schemes being undertaken/considered for expansion of telecom network in rural and remote areas are provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in the uncovered villages, replacement of Multi Access Radio Relay (MARR) based VPTs, support for RDELs, setting up of shared mobile towers, provision of wire line/wireless broadband connectivity in rural areas, creation of general infrastructure in rural areas etc.